

The Linacre Quarterly

Volume 55 | Number 3

Article 2

August 1988

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Recommended Citation

Diamond, Eugene F. (1988) "Eulogy Given at the Funeral of Dennis J. Horan," *The Linacre Quarterly*: Vol. 55 : No. 3 , Article 2.
Available at: <https://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq/vol55/iss3/2>

Eulogy Given at the Funeral of Dennis J. Horan

by Dr. Eugene Diamond

(Chicago attorney Dennis Horan, a long-time *Linacre Quarterly* editorial advisory board member and loyal contributor of articles, died very unexpectedly.)

How does one speak an epitaph of a life so illustrious as that of Dennis Horan, without having it sound reductionist and anti-climactic?

Perhaps, since I am representing the pro-life people, I can recall the words of Henry V.

*We few, We happy few, We band of brothers
For he that shed his blood with me
Shall be my brother
Be he ne're so vile
This day shall gentle his condition
And gentlemen in England now abed
Shall think themselves accursed
Whilst any speaks who
Fought with us upon St. Crispin's day.*

The pro-life movement has been a long twilight struggle. We never expected it to last 20 years or to cost 20 million lives. But whenever the banners were unfurled or whenever the trumpets were sounded on the ramparts, we looked to Dennis as our leader.

Dennis never heard of burnout. The fire did not consume him, it ignited him. He did not lead gently. He had a built-in lawyer's scold. I can hear him at dozens of meetings saying, "Stick to the point" or "Follow the agenda." Dennis Horan was a hard-nosed man; to which we say "Thank you Dennis, we needed that."

Dennis was a success as any man would measure success, but his success had another dimension. His instincts told him that success did not derive from who you are or what you own, but from what you do with what you have. He was incredibly productive. His writings, the books he edited would fill a small library and yet he must have known that his true achievements would be recorded not on bankbooks or even journal pages, but on the tablet of the heart . . . the hearts of those who knew him, respected him and loved him or in

another context, those who tried to best him in debate or match him in his fervor.

I knew Dennis as a friend and a comrade in arms, but also as a client. He was my attorney when he made our plea before the United States Supreme Court in the matter of Diamond vs. Charles. Yet I was not really his client. He had other clients to whom he had a closer kinship. He really represented his sister, the embryo, and his brother the fetus. He was the principal lawyer for all those slaughtered innocents so rudely deflected from a world they would never inherit.

Dennis argued with crystal clarity and he wrote with syllogistic precision, but we read the larger message in his eyes. He simply knew that when an unborn child died in abortion, a unique and irreplaceable human person died. He knew it with a vengeance. Beauty was discarded as surely as if it were a child killed at play. Fullness was emptied as surely as if it were a young man dying in war. A dream was ended as surely as if it were a public figure shot down by an assassin.

Men like Dennis are actually irreplaceable. Who will attract young people to the movement as he attracted a whole generation of young lawyers to the AUL fellowship? Who else will have the unique ability to make us all so angry that we drag ourselves back into the saddle and go out again to bend our lances against the giant's shield?

Dennis was a man designed for his time. He embodied the simple message of John Donne. "Any man's death diminishes me for I am part of mankind." He confronted a society which believes that any man's birth diminishes me, my share of space, my share of freedom, my share of the world's resources.

No household is large enough to accommodate one pro-lifer. No marriage can survive when only one spouse opposes abortion and so, since Dolores was part of him, she was of necessity one of us.

The other night we speculated that maybe it was not so bad to die at the peak of one's powers, like Dennis, and so never to experience a period of decline. Dennis, I am sure, would have said "What peak, who says this is my peak?" No, we must together climb the rest of Dennis's peak. His commitment must become our commitment. We owe it to the living. We owe it to those as yet unborn. We owe it to our God.